

London Diocesan Board for Schools School-Centred Initial Teacher Training

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	The Mitford Centre 1-3 Mitford Road London N19 4HJ
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Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors in accordance with the Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008–11).
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

Key to inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Explanation of terms used in this report

Attainment is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

Progress is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

Achievement is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

The provider

3. The London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme works in partnership with Church of England primary schools across the diocese of London. It was established in 1998 to help meet the recruitment needs of Church of England primary schools. Since then the SCITT has established itself as a significant provider of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to partnership schools. It provides one-year full-time initial teacher education (ITE) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 for postgraduate trainees leading to a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and qualified teacher status (QTS). The partnership comprises over 50 Diocesan primary schools spread over 12 London boroughs. The SCITT is currently working with 17 schools. At the time of the inspection there were 22 trainees. The SCITT shares a site with St Mark's Church of England Primary School, Islington.

Provision in the primary phase

Key strengths

4. The key strengths are:
 - the coherence, commitment and vision of all members of the partnership, which promotes good and rising attainment for trainees
 - high quality professional dialogue between trainers and trainees, which clearly articulates how well trainees are doing and what they need to improve
 - high quality teaching by course and school-based tutors, resulting in confident trainees who have high rates of employment in London schools
 - the rapid impact on attainment and drive for continuous improvement by the SCITT training manager
 - very good pastoral and academic support for trainees
 - the partnership's response to national initiatives and its prompt actions to ensure that trainees are confident and well prepared to teach systematic synthetic phonics.

Recommendations

5. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, and increase the proportion of outstanding trainees, the partnership should:
 - establish clear starting points from which to track trainees' progress in improving their teaching between and within school-experience placements
 - ensure greater consistency in the written feedback trainees receive, particularly in respect of their progress against the Standards
 - set improvement targets for trainees which are precise, measurable, have a high degree of challenge and are rigorously followed up.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

6. Provision across the partnership is of consistently good quality. Trainees have a good understanding of the characteristics of a good teacher and are well prepared to teach. Their attainment by the end of the course has steadily improved, with most judged to be good or better over the last three years. About one third of the current cohort is expected to be judged outstanding. Because the SCITT is widely recognised as a good provider of newly qualified teachers, the number of applicants greatly exceeds the number of available places. For 2011/12 all places have been filled and there is a waiting list of

applicants. Interview procedures are rigorous and make good use of the well-briefed partnership headteachers. The recruitment process for trainees includes a skills audit which is used very effectively to identify trainees' particular strengths and areas of weakness. It contributes to the trainees' individual training plan and trainees' first meetings with their tutors and is a very good tool for providing additional support for areas of weakness. These early audits of trainees' skills and knowledge in areas such as mathematics and literacy are used to set pre-course tasks and reading for trainees and form the baseline for further audits intended to track trainees' developing knowledge and progress.

7. The recruitment of under-represented groups is strong. Of the current cohort half are of minority ethnic heritage and over half of accepted candidates for 2011/12 are of minority ethnic heritage. Headteachers and tutors of minority ethnic heritage are good role models for all trainees. A fifth of the current cohort are men, which exceeds the SCITT recruitment target. The SCITT is notably successful in its aim of recruiting trainees with the potential to be high quality teachers to serve the recruitment needs of diocesan schools. Most of last year's trainees secured teaching posts, all in London. Of these, over half are teaching in LDBS schools. Retention rates, which have been too low in the past, have improved significantly, with over 90% of current trainees expected to complete the course in a timely manner. Headteachers say that LDBS trainees are held in high esteem for their practical skills and ability to settle quickly into a school environment.
8. The quality of central and school-based training is good. Both provide breadth and balance and result in reflective, confident and enthusiastic trainees. Good balance between central and school-based training results in good cohesion between what trainees learn in lectures and workshops and their application of that learning in classrooms. This is partly because of the strength of SCITT training, with trainees and recent NQTs speaking very positively about the high quality teaching they receive in a wide range of areas, including science and English. The strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural theme, which is a central part of the ethos of the SCITT, is very well reflected in trainees' preparation for teaching and they say it is a strength of the training. The SCITT makes very good use of school-based tutors to bring current practice and expertise into the training programme. Communication across the partnership is good. All partners share a real commitment to enabling trainees to become skilled teachers and fulfilling a pressing need for good teachers to work in London schools. School-based partners say that link tutors and other SCITT staff are readily available and highly responsive to suggestions for improvement. Trainees also speak highly of the ease of communication with all members of the SCITT and their quick and ready response.
9. Trainees are very well prepared to work with pupils with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities. Differentiating learning to meet the needs of all learners and valuing the contribution all pupils can make is integral to the professional strand of training and to the ethos of the SCITT. Trainees are also very aware of the link between high quality learning and the development of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. While they are well equipped with specific behaviour management strategies, and confident to

implement the strategies adopted by partner schools, they know that good teaching coupled to high expectations are of fundamental importance. A comprehensive review of the training programme has meant that there is now a more in-depth review of the teaching of early reading and synthetic phonics. It is revisited regularly during the course and there is a strong emphasis on trainees seeing good models of classroom practice through working with visiting experts from partnership schools. There is well-timed subject-specific feedback which enables the trainees to significantly move forward in their practice. Sessions are practical and provide greater coherence with trainees' school-based needs. There is now a school visit by the whole cohort, early on in the programme, to see synthetic phonics being taught across the years from Foundation to Year 6. Consequently the coherence between centre- and school-based training, as well as the sense of a phased, developmental programme, is all improved. Trainee evaluations of the relevant sessions this year have been very positive. Directed learning tasks and additional learning opportunities provide trainees with a focus that enables them to reflect on how they might apply their learning to the classroom context and to their own teaching.

10. The SCITT analyses how well trainees and groups of trainees are doing very carefully and when individuals or identifiable groups are doing less well than expected it takes very effective action to address this. Tutors and mentors provide highly effective verbal support for trainees. Verbal feedback on lessons and on trainees' progress is accurate and incisive and tells trainees how well they are doing and how to improve further. The best feedback makes very good use of questioning to prompt trainees to reflect on their teaching and suggest where and how their practice could be improved. The partnership is less effective in providing precise written targets for improvement which are measurable, regularly followed up and explicitly referenced to exceeding the Standards. While the partnership's assessment of how well trainees are doing is accurate, targets for improving the quality of trainees' teaching, particularly during and at the end of the first school experience, do not always provide enough information about trainees' progress against the Standards or what they need to do to improve. Trainees experience working in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. School placements are well matched to meeting the needs of trainees.
11. The SCITT makes good use of the resources at its disposal. Resources are deployed to ensure trainees are well supported and that all identifiable groups make good progress. It works closely with two local authorities in order to use their resources and maximise opportunities for trainees. Tutors make frequent and regular visits to schools to support trainees and mentors and provide very effective personalised support for trainees experiencing problems. The promotion of equality and diversity is good rather than outstanding because the quality of target setting for all trainees is not consistently good across all settings. Other aspects of provision are strong, with trainees very well prepared to teach in a diverse society and to work with pupils from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The impact of the SCITT Race Equality Policy is regularly reviewed by the training manager and reported on to the Quality Assurance and Executive Committee.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 2

12. The training manager provides committed and forward-looking leadership coupled with a quiet determination to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for trainees. The actions taken during her period of leadership have already had a significant impact on trainees' attainment and success rates. Improvement planning is securely based on robust and accurate self-evaluation. The SCITT's self-evaluation processes involve all of the key partners, including mentors, tutors, headteachers and trainees. This process of self-evaluation has resulted in the accurate identification of strengths and areas for improvement. These are intended to raise attainment and accelerate progress, and where possible are expressed in measurable terms. The analysis of how well individuals and groups of trainees are doing and of recent trends is very thorough. The training manager and others carefully analyse how well trainees are doing and take rapid action to support those who require it. Schools and trainees say that support is always prompt and of good quality. For trainees experiencing problems the support is very well matched to their particular needs and well focused on helping them complete the course to a high standard. External examiner reports comment on the accuracy of the SCITT's assessment of trainees' teaching. This view is confirmed by inspectors' observations of trainees, discussions with trainees and members of the partnership and the scrutiny of trainees' files. Academic moderation by Roehampton University confirms the accuracy of grading for written assignments. External examiners and university moderators both comment on the willingness of the SCITT to listen to and act on advice received. External examiners also comment on the rigour of the SCITT's quality assurance procedures.
13. The SCITT has made good progress in addressing the points for consideration from the last inspection report. Subject knowledge audits are now used much more consistently. They are well used to inform pre-course reading for trainees and serve as a useful benchmark from which to measure trainees' developing subject knowledge for teaching. Improvement planning is now strong and links closely to targets for the improvement of trainees' attainment and to making them better teachers. School-based training is good. The SCITT has identified where schools have particular areas of expertise, such as in the teaching of synthetic phonics or strategies to encourage good behaviour, and uses these very effectively in focus days and to contribute to central training.
14. The SCITT has been proactive in seeking the views of current and recent trainees and has acted promptly on their concerns and recommendations. Those parts of the taught programme which were less effective have been improved. Strengths, such as the involvement of current classroom practitioners in teaching key areas of the curriculum and professional strand, have been reinforced. The committee structure is working well, with sub-

committees such as the Curriculum Committee influential in evaluating the effectiveness of provision and making suggestions for changes, such as how to best prepare trainees to teach religious education in a diverse faith community.

15. The partnership has been very effective in anticipating change and is, for example, working closely with London Metropolitan University to develop the teaching of synthetic phonics through story-telling. The leadership of the SCITT is also highly responsive to suggestions for improvement, so that, for example, changes have been made to the teaching of early reading and synthetic phonics which have resulted in trainees being better prepared and more confident in the classroom. Communication across the partnership is good. Priorities for improvement are agreed among all of the partners and widely shared. Tutors play an important role in strengthening the partnership, and schools, trainees and mentors value their visits and expertise. The partnership agreement is clear about the benefits and responsibilities of membership of the partnership, with clear information about selection and de-selection criteria.
16. The LDBS SCITT was established in order to enable the London Diocese and Church of England primary schools to contribute to teacher training and to support the training and recruitment of teachers for London schools. It has been conspicuously successful in meeting this aim. Because of this, and because the committed and successful leadership of the SCITT has resulted in a trend of improvements to success rates, the SCITT has a good capacity to improve further.

Summary of inspection grades¹

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

		Primary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2
Factors contributing to trainees attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?		2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		2

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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